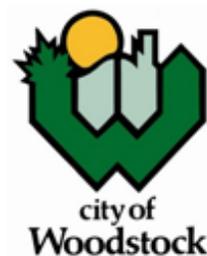


The City of Woodstock's Annual Status Report of the Multi- Year Accessibility Plan



2015

A summary of Woodstock's accomplishments towards inclusion in 2015, and looking ahead to 2016. In compliance with Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005.

Accessible formats and communication supports are available, upon request.

Background and Purpose

The purpose of this status report is to make the public aware of the City of Woodstock's progress with regards to our 2013-2017 Accessibility Plan to prevent and remove barriers and meet requirements under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005 (AODA). An open public meeting was held on November 12, 2015 to allow the public to have the opportunity to participate in a review and to provide feedback regarding the accessibility plan. The City of Woodstock's 2013-2017 Municipal Accessibility Plan can be found on our [website](http://www.cityofwoodstock.ca) (www.cityofwoodstock.ca). We have been investing resources to remove barriers, and will continue to build on this momentum to improve accessibility.

The City's vision on accessibility:

- To promote public awareness and sensitivity to all persons with disabilities;
- To encourage co-operation between all service and interest groups;
- To identify and document relevant matters and concerns;
- To create a community that provides opportunities for barrier-free access to housing, transportation, education, recreation, health care and employment;
- To embrace the concept of universal design to include both persons with disabilities and the increasing aging population;
- To ensure that policies and practices are maintained in relation to the development and redevelopment of services and facilities that have regard to persons with disabilities and aging population statistics;
- To ensure that the City receives the maximum economic benefits from building an accessible City;
- To encourage public participation and civic engagement in community accessibility matters.

The City of Woodstock is dedicated to promoting a barrier-free City for employees, citizens and all who live, work, visit, and invest in Woodstock. With this plan, the City is proud to present its findings and report on the development of strategies to remove and prevent future barriers for people with disabilities and the aging population.

The Legislation

In 2005, the Government of Ontario committed to the development of five accessibility standards under the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act. The purpose of AODA is to develop, implement and enforce accessibility standards in order to achieve accessibility for Ontarians with disabilities by the year 2025. These standards outline the identification, removal, and prevention of barriers so that people with disabilities will have more opportunities to participate in everyday life.

The Accessibility Standards for *Customer Service* was the first standard to become law as a regulation. The City has fully implemented all requirements of this standard.

The next four (4) Standards have been combined as the Integrated Accessibility Standards Regulation. This is now law and requirements are being phased in each year.

- The *Information and Communications* Standard will help Ontario businesses and organizations make their information accessible for people with disabilities.
- The *Employment* Standard will help Ontario businesses and organizations make accessibility a regular part of their recruitment, hiring and supporting employees with disabilities.
- The *Transportation* Standard will make it easier for everyone to travel in Ontario.
- The *Design of Public Spaces* Standards will make it easier for persons with disabilities to move through, use and enjoy our community public spaces.

Update on the Building Code

Effective January 1, 2015, the Building Code was amended to include specific requirements that seek to enhance accessibility in newly constructed buildings and existing buildings that require extensive renovations.

The amended requirements of the Building Code cover a wide range of areas which include:

- Requirements for visual fire alarms to be installed in all public corridors of multi-unit residential buildings and in all multi-unit residential suites
- Requirements for all smoke alarms in all buildings, including houses, to include a visual component
- Requirements for an elevator or other barrier-free access to be provided between storeys in most buildings, with some exemptions for small residential and business occupancy buildings

- Requirements for power door operators to be provided at entrances to a wider range of buildings, and at entrances to barrier-free washrooms and common rooms in multi-unit residential buildings
- Updated requirements for barrier-free washrooms and universal washrooms
- Requirements for barrier-free access to public pools and spas
- Updated requirements for accessible and adaptable seating spaces in public assembly buildings such as theatres, lecture halls and places of worship

The amendments to the Building Code work together with the *Design of Public Spaces* standard, introduced in 2012, to finalize the government's commitment to an accessibility standard for the built environment.

For more information on the new requirements, please visit the Building Code website at www.ontario.ca/buildingcode.

City of Woodstock Updates

Bus Stops and Shelters

There have been numerous changes and improvements that have increased the accessibility of bus stops and bus shelters in Woodstock. This past year City staff was able to complete the project started in 2014 of converting 60 existing bus stops into accessible bus stops, leading to all the bus stops in the City being accessible. In addition, all bus shelters are accessible and will continue to be built to the City's accessibility standards.

Transit

All City conventional buses are now fully accessible. The Transit Department has also started to promote and provide Transit Travel Training. One goal of the program is to assist persons with disabilities to become familiar and comfortable with the conventional routes and accessibility features of the conventional buses so that they can independently ride conventional transit if possible.

Highlights of 2015

The below list highlights the planned accessibility action items for 2015 that were outlined in the 2013-2017 Multi-Year Plan. These items are a representation of the City's commitment in striving towards a barrier-free city. If a requirement has been completed in a previous year, it has not been listed here.

Planned Action Item	Status
Continue accessibility improvements to City Hall	<i>Complete – New accessible furniture was purchased for the City’s committee room.</i>
Purchase a new fully accessible conventional bus to replace existing bus	<i>Complete – all conventional buses are fully accessible.</i>
Continue improving the accessibility of bus stops and bus shelters	<i>Complete- all bus stops and bus shelters are accessible. New bus shelters will be built to accessibility guidelines.</i>

Accessibility Improvements Above and Beyond the Original Plan

Website

In order to further assist persons with disabilities, the City of Woodstock has again recently upgraded the software program BrowseAloud Plus on the Municipal Website. The BrowseAloud program has introduced a new interactive toolbar that is more user friendly. The toolbar allows the user to utilize a number of support tools which includes contrast options, upgraded integrations, and availability on mobile and tablet devices. The integration of the new interactive and user friendly toolbar will further enhance the interaction and accessibility of the City of Woodstock’s website for persons with disabilities.

Parks

Several accessibility upgrades have been made at various City parks. For instance, the Parks Department purchased four new accessible picnic tables for the Boathouse and the Bandshell. A new play structure has been installed at the Burtch Street playground which has several accessibility features. In addition a new playground was also built at the Bexley playground which includes an accessible slide and rope area. The Parks Department has also completed an accessible entrance to the Henry Street Dog Park providing greater ease of access for persons with disabilities. The Parks Department also increased accessibility at the lookout area near The Jack Dunn Memorial Ball Diamond by renovating the surface area and installing an accessible walkway.

South Gate Centre

South Gate Centre recently implemented various accessibility features to their building. The accessibility improvements include the installation of automatic sliding doors, installation of paddle doors, and improvements to the mens, womens, and accessible washrooms. The various improvements to the washrooms include the installation of: automatic soap dispensers, automatic water faucets, automatic turbo hand dryers, toilet paper dispensers, grab bars, and new accessible vanities in both the mens and womens washroom. In addition, the cobble stone walkway in the rear of the building was removed and replaced with a new concrete walkway. The new concrete walkway further enhances the accessibility of the outdoor patio and gazebo.

Traffic Signals & Crossing Protection

Recent road construction projects have provided additional accessible features. The intersection of Dundas and Springbank has had an audible signal installed to allow persons who are visually impaired to cross the street safely. There has also been an increase in the completion of sidewalk curb cuts around the City to provide better accessibility. Identifying and fixing areas that require curb cuts is expected to continue for the next few years.

Southside Pool

Automatic sliding doors were installed at the front entrance of Southside pool. Accessible portable washrooms were also installed outside the wading pool for greater access to washrooms outside facility operating hours.

AODA Website Compliance

The City of Woodstock hired a Web Developer/ AODA specialist in late 2015. The overall goal of the AODA specialist is to ensure that the City of Woodstock complies with the legislative requirement of ensuring that all web content conforms to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 Level AA by the year 2021. Due to the recent nature of the position any new updates will be provided in the 2016 plan.

Looking Ahead to 2016

This section outlines goals that the City of Woodstock plans to work toward in order to continue to improve accessibility for the year 2016.

- Complete the Community Complex elevator renovation
- Create an accessible walkway to the Boathouse

Above and beyond the original 2013-2017 Multi-year Plan

- Install an accessible gate at Southside Park
- Continue the installation of indoor paddle doors at South Gate Centre

Accessibility projects that fall under the “*Above and beyond*” category are projects that are outside the scope of the 2013-2017 Multi-year plan. The 2013-2017 Multi-year plan was developed in 2012 and was based on capital budget projects that were anticipated to occur between the years 2013-2017. As a result, any new projects that were not included in the municipality’s capital budget as of 2013 are included as projects that go above and beyond the original plan.

Update on the Built Environment Standard

The *Built Environment* Standard includes the Design of Public Spaces Standard and focuses on removing barriers in public spaces. Beginning in 2016, the City of Woodstock will be required to meet accessibility requirements when constructing and maintaining new or redeveloped elements of public spaces including:

- Recreational trails and beach access routes
- Outdoor eating areas and play spaces (such as playgrounds)
- Exterior paths of travel (such as walkways across parks or between buildings)
- Accessible on- and off-street parking
- Service counters and waiting areas

For more information please visit the Ministry of Economic Development, Trade and Employment [website](#).

Accessibility Feedback Policy

The City has in place a system for managing, evaluating and taking action on customer feedback regarding the City's delivery of accessible goods or services. Feedback may be provided either:

- In person at any City of Woodstock facility
- Via email to accessibility@cityofwoodstock.ca
- Via telephone at 519-539-1291 or TTY 519-539-7268

All feedback will be investigated, forwarded to the appropriate personnel, responded to, documented and tracked within seven (7) days. Feedback will be accepted in accessible formats and with other communication supports as required.

Continuous Achievement in Accessibility

In General...

- The City offers customer service to accommodate persons with disabilities;
- All departments must make the Clerk's Department aware of changes to facilities or services which increase accessibility so that the *Access Guide* remains a current document available to the public;
- The Accessibility Committee develops key messages to communicate with and educate the general public and staff;
- Evacuation procedures are in place for persons with disabilities at municipal facilities;
- The City provides education to the general public on accessibility issues faced by persons with disabilities;

Human Resources

- The City continues to train all new staff, volunteers, contractors and any other third parties who interact with the public on the City's behalf about the requirements of the Integrated Standards, 191/11 and the Customer Service Regulation, 429/07; and
- We continue to uphold employment equity policies and procedures;

Engineering

- An Accessibility Advisory Committee member is designated as the site plan reviewer to ensure accessibility is considered when reviewing site plan approvals;

- When planning sidewalks and walkways, the City implements accessibility features such as curb cuts, ramps, grate design, and location and grade elevations;
- Create designated accessible parking spaces at municipal facilities; and
- Where feasible, all steps at municipal facilities will be maintained so that they are cane detectable with contrasted nosings and treads;

Transit

- The City continues to provide a transit system that respects people's dignity and offers equal service to everyone, including those with a disability;
- Fare and hours of service parity between the conventional and specialized transit services exists:
 - The same fare is charged for persons with disabilities as passengers without disabilities, and there is never a charge for storing mobility aids.
 - Support Persons for persons with disabilities are not charged a fare.

Methodologies

Review of Current Activities to Identify Barriers

A review of current activities to identify barriers is ongoing with the goal of creating policies and procedures to prevent future barriers from being created and viewing the identified ones as opportunities for improvement. Barriers will be addressed on an ongoing basis.

Monitoring Progress and Audit Function

The status report of the Multi-Year Accessibility Plan is required on an annual basis and reviews by the Staff Accessibility Advisory Team will occur prior to the budget preparation cycle each year. The purpose of an annual review of the Multi-Year Municipal Accessibility Plan is to evaluate whether or not targets are being met and to adopt a plan to meet current expectations. The Staff Accessibility Advisory Team and the Accessibility Advisory Committee meet in May of each year to discuss the current year Accessibility Plan and to consider the upcoming year's accessibility capital budget. An annual public meeting shall be held involving persons with disabilities to review and collect feedback on the Plan, including conventional and specialized transit, as well as the annual Status Report.

Communication of Plan

The availability of the Multi-Year Municipal Accessibility Plan and any Status Reports are announced publicly at the televised City Council meeting. Additionally, plans and reports are posted on the City's [website](#).

Conclusion

The City of Woodstock is committed to continuously addressing accessibility barriers and to being progressive in developing innovative solutions to accessibility matters. We believe in integration and equal opportunity and are committed to treating all people in a way that allows them to maintain their dignity and independence. The City recommends that the Province coordinate the preparation of uniform Municipal Accessibility Guidelines so that the guidelines can be implemented in a consistent manner and that the Province provides Accessibility Funding to assist municipalities in the implementation of barrier-free services and facilities.

For more information on the City of Woodstock's 2015 Status Report contact Chris Gauthier or Amy Humphries:

- In person at City Hall, 500 Dundas St Woodstock
- By phone 519-539-1291 (TTY: 519-539-7268)
- Via email at cgauthier@cityofwoodstock.ca or ahumpries@cityofwoodstock.ca